

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, after the title, please insert as follows:

This application is a continuation of PCT International Application No. PCT/IB2003/002708 filed 08/07/2003. PCT/IB2003/002708 claims priority to IT Application No. MO2002A000199 filed 09/07/2002. The entire contents of these applications are incorporated herein by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1 line 3, as follows:

The invention concerns an apparatus for conveying fruit and vegetable products, particularly for example grapes, from a loading zone to an unloading zone in which the products will be further processed.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 2 line 27, as follows:

One object of the invention is to improve the apparatuses for conveying fruit and vegetable products, particularly for example grapes.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3 line 8, as follows:

In a first aspect of the invention, is provided an apparatus for conveying fruit and vegetable products, particularly for example grapes, comprising a hopper means-device suitable for receiving said products and a screw-feeder means-arrangement suitable for

conveying said products towards an outlet zone, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein said screw-feeder means-arrangement has a variable pitch.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3 line 15, as follows:

In one ~~advantageous~~ embodiment, the pitch of the screw-feeder means-arrangement is growing proceeding towards said outlet zone.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3 line 18, as follows:

The screw-feeder arrangement with variable pitch means-ensures that the product is processed in different ways inasmuch as the quantity of products moved by the greater pitch portions of the screw-feeder means-arrangement is greater than the quantity of products moved by the lesser pitch portions.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3 line 23, as follows:

Providing screw-feeder means-arrangement with a pitch growing towards the outlet zone, it is possible to pick up from the regions of the hopper means-device near the outlet zone a quantity of product that is greater than the quantity picked up from the regions of the hopper means-device that are farer from said outlet zone. In this way, accumulation of the products in the hopper means-device near the outlet zone, and the 'bridge' effect are avoided. Furthermore, is ensured a non-traumatic treatment of the

fruit and vegetable products, which are not subjected to excessive pressure or to cutting actions.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 1, as follows:

In a second aspect of the invention, is provided the use of screw-feeder ~~means~~
arrangement with variable pitch for conveying fruit and vegetable products, particularly
for example grapes.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 9, as follows:

The variable pitch screw-feeder ~~means~~arrangement can also be used in prior-art
apparatuses for conveying fruit and vegetable products replacing the constant pitch
screw-feeders of the state of the art.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 13, as follows:

This enables to transform the known apparatuses into efficient apparatuses that do not
have the above-listed drawback, with limited investments and reduced installation times,
inasmuch as it is not necessary to replace the entire apparatus but only the screw-
feeder ~~means~~arrangement thereof.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 27, as follows:

Figures 1 and 3 show an apparatus 1 for conveying fruit and vegetable products, in particular for example grapes, in a conveying direction F towards an outlet zone 9.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5 line 8, as follows:

The screw-feeder 6 is provided with a variable pitch, in particular for example a pitch growing towards the outlet zone 9.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5 line 11, as follows:

In a preferred one embodiment, shown in Figure 2, can be identified in the screw-feeder 6 different zones having different pitches from one another. In particular, starting from the fixed panel 5 farer from the outlet zone 9, can be identified a first portion 10 of the screw-feeder 6 having a first value p_1 of pitch about of 200 mm. Subsequently can be identified a second portion 11 in which the pitch has a second value p_2 , comprised between 200 and 250 mm, and a third portion 12 in which the pitch has a third value p_3 of about 300 mm. Finally, near the outlet zone 9, can be identified a fourth portion 13 of the screw-feeder 6 in which the pitch has a fourth value p_4 , of 400 mm. Experimental tests have shown that these values enable the fruit and vegetable products to be conveyed in an optimal manner towards the outlet zone 9, using a screw-feeder 6 having an external diameter of about 400 mm.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5 line 27, as follows:

A motor arrangement~~Motor~~ means, not shown, it is also provided in order to actuate the rotation of the screw-feeder 6.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6 line 4, as follows:

At this point, the variable pitch screw-feeder 6 is rotated by the motor ~~means~~ arrangement in such a way as to direct the grapes towards the outlet zone 9. As the quantity of grapes conveyed by the screw-feeder 6 is proportional to the pitch of the screw-feeder 6, the lesser pitch portions convey a smaller quantity of grapes than those conveyed from the greater pitch portions. The quantity of grapes picked up from regions far from the outlet zone 9 is therefore less than the quantity picked up from regions near said outlet zone 9, and this avoids great accumulations of grapes to be formed near the outlet zone 9.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6 line 19, as follows:

Apparatuses for conveying fruit and vegetable products, particularly for example grapes, of the known type with a screw-feeder having a constant pitch can rapidly be converted into apparatuses like those described in Figures 1 to 3 by simply replacing the constant pitch screw-feeder with a variable pitch screw-feeder similar to the screw-feeder 6.